

MOVIES MOVIES MOVIES

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COMING

ATTRactions

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1982
\$2.50

45
NEW MOVIES
FOR THE
HOLIDAYS



Streep
Kline
SOPHIE'S
CHOICE



Pryor Gleason
THE TOY

Goldie
Do *BEST FRIENDS* Marry?



AIRPLANE II
New Lunacy



TOOTSIE
Dustin
Hoffman??



COMING ATTRACTIONS makes every effort to cover the movies slated for opening and national distribution during the coming two-month period. Release dates vary in different parts of the country, and because moviemaking is so complex, they can and do change. Since we cannot provide an exact monthly release schedule, cast and credits appear in alphabetical order by movie.

CAST: Klaus Kinski, Don Oppen, Kendra Kirchner, Brie Howard, Crofton Hardester, Norbert Weisser

48 HRS.: Director, Walter Gordon; Joel Silver; executive producer, Christine Conte; screenplay, John Wood; director of photography, Freeman Davies. A Paramount Production. **CAST:** Nick Nolte, Eddie Murphy, James Remar, Sonny Landham, Michael McRae, Olivia Brown, Glenn Platter, Clint Smith, Bjaye Turner.



About the cover: Richard Pryor is *The Toy* that tycoon Jackie Gleason buys for his spoiled son; Goldie Hawn is *Best Friends* with her roommate (Burt Reynolds)—until they decide to marry; Julie Hagerty and Robert Hays are heading for the moon in *Airplane II*; and that cute brunette is Dustin Hoffman, playing a soap-opera star in *Tootsie*. The couple in the corner are the passionate lovers of *Sophie's Choice*, Meryl Streep and Kevin Kline.

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THE DARK CRYSTAL

FANTASY REIGNS, RICH
AND RIOTOUS, IN
JIM HENSON'S
NEW-ANCIENT
WORLD OF MAGICAL CREATURES

From Aesop to *E.T.*, fable and fantasy have had an irresistible hold on the human mind. Left to its own devices, the imagination seems able, rabbitlike, to breed beings of all sorts at an astonishing rate. Every forest and glade, mountain and valley, cavern and crevice in the Old World has its nymph, satyr, elf, leprechaun, gremlin, goblin, or troll. America has its occasional local boogeyman or Bigfoot, but the New World imagination particularly seems to flourish beyond the grave—spawning ghosts, demons, poltergeists and possessions—or beyond the stars, which now throng with aliens of every ilk.

One way to beat the fantasy population explosion is to move to the suburbs, as a number of frustrated phantoms, displaced demons and errant extraterrestrials have recently done. Another is to create a whole new world, virgin territory for fancy to run riot. That's just what producer-director Jim Henson, co-director Frank Oz and co-producer Gary Kurtz have done in *The Dark Crystal*, a new release from Universal Pictures and Associated Film Distribution Corporation.

The world of *The Dark Crystal* was not created in six days and six nights. Its demiurge, Muppet magician Jim Henson, first conceived the project about five years ago. Henson had an idea for a classic fable of adventure, discovery and destiny that would take place in a universe spun from the whole cloth of imagination—the kind of creation that has thus far been realized most successfully in literature, in works like Tolkien's *Ring* trilogy or Richard Adams' *Water-ship Down*. *The Dark Crystal* was to be a world out of time, indeterminate as to place. And it was to be a full-length live-action movie, not relying on conventional animation or stop-motion animation, but using life-size fantasy "actors" filmed on sets, just as human performers would be.

To bring this \$25-million modern-day Genesis to the screen, Henson enlisted his longtime Muppet associate Frank Oz (a.k.a. Miss Piggy, Fozzie Bear and Yoda) and *Star Wars* producer Gary Kurtz. Henson's story was turned into a script by David Odell (*Dealing*, *The Muppet Movie*), with special dialogue devised by British fantasy writer Alan Garner (*The Weirdstone of Brisingamen*, *The Moon of Gomrath*, *Elidor*). British artist Brian Froud, co-illustrator of the best-seller *Faeries*, took Henson's concepts and gave them shape, color and personality in an elaborate series of

The world of *The Dark Crystal* is filled with fabulous creatures like this urRu Scribe. The urRu, gentle sages of the Mystic Valley, shelter the Gelfling hero, Jen.





Preliminary sketch of an urRu by Brian Froud, noted British fantasy artist. Froud is credited as "conceptual designer" of *The Dark Crystal*.



This Skekses Scientist is obviously one of the villains of the piece.



Above, a Froud sketch of a Skekses head circled by an astronomical symbol. Below, the Skekses High Priest in full regalia.





Cradling her beloved pet, Fizzgig, Kira joins Jen on a perilous journey to the Skekses castle. The last survivors of the Gelfling race, they must restore a lost fragment to the Dark Crystal before the Great Conjunction of the Three Suns. Above, a Brian Froud sketch of Jen and his Gelfling garb, seen at left in the final version of *The Dark Crystal*.



Artist's rendition of the bedchamber of the Skekses Emperor, one of hundreds of preliminary drawings of *Dark Crystal* sets.



Looks aren't everything in life—the hideous Aughra (above) is a wise astronomer who helps Jen on his quest. Below, a miniature model of the *Dark Crystal* landscape.

drawings and paintings. Then it was up to the talented technicians of the Henson Organization to bring three-dimensional life to Froud's newborn timeless races.

The result of their collective efforts is an extraordinary cast of urRu, Skekses, Gelflings, Garthim, Pod People and Landstriders, to name but a few of *The Dark Crystal*'s species of flora and fauna. Henson doesn't like to call them Muppets—on an evolutionary scale, they bear the same relation to Kermit the Frog and the Cookie Monster as *homo sapiens* bears to the first apes swinging from the trees. Even the wonderfully wizened Yoda of *Star Wars* is a primitive life form compared to the elaborately realized beings of *The Dark Crystal*. Some of these fully articulated "puppets" require as many as six humans to perform the simplest action; others actually are people dressed up in costumes—but the "costumes" contain elaborate wiring, gears, cogs, cables and circuits the likes of which Rube Goldberg might have envied.

The natural environment of *The Dark Crystal* was given concrete form by production designer Harry Lange, who started out as a NASA illustrator and went on to work on *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *Superman I and II*, and *The Empire Strikes Back*. The great Romantic poets who derived inspiration from contemplating Nature in her supreme majesty



would have had a field day in *The Dark Crystal*, where mountains migrate, trees take strolls, and rocks converse with reeds and rushing rivers. The moviemakers' "Let there be light" is equally extravagant: the world of *The Dark Crystal* has not one but three suns, whose celestial navigations figure prominently in the movie's plot.

The plot may well be the most conventional thing about *The Dark Crystal*. It begins a millennium ago, when the world was ruled by a race of saintly sages, keepers of a glowing Crystal transfused with the light of the Three Suns. Then a terrible cataclysm convulsed the world. The Crystal cracked and darkened, and the evil Skekses seized control, inaugurating a brutal reign.

The Skekses thrive on the corrupted energy of the captive Crystal, which is the closely guarded source of their power. They are now preparing for the great ceremony when the world's Three Suns will converge over the Crystal in a cosmic battery recharge that will confirm their domination for all time. Only one thing stands in their way: an ancient prophecy that they will be destroyed by a member of the Gelfling race. But the Skekses aren't losing any sleep over it. Long ago they dispatched their fearsome Garthim, grotesque insectoid warriors, to out-Herod Herod and exterminate every last Gelfling from the face of the planet.

Miraculously, if predictably, one Gelfling has survived: young Jen, raised by the urRu in an isolated valley. The urRu are gentle, homely mystics who resemble a hybrid of intellectual anteater, woolly mammoth and three-toed sloth. Jen, who looks like a cross between Pan and Puck, knows he is not one of them, but it's only when his beloved urRu Master and Teacher dies that Jen learns something of his origins and his destiny. On his deathbed, the Master shows Jen a vision of a crystal shard that he must seek.

The bereaved Jen sets forth on a perilous journey that takes him to the observatory of the absolutely frightful-looking but profoundly wise astronomer Aughra. There he finds the crystal shard of the vision. Meanwhile, of course, the Skekses have learned of Jen's mission and sent the Garthim to finish him off. As they close in, Jen escapes into

a spooky swamp where he encounters an eerie assortment of things that go bump in the night. Strangest of all the swamp denizens is Kira—a fellow Gelfling!

Kira too survived the massacre and has been sheltered by the Pod People, who live hidden away from the Skekses deep in the wilderness. Kira takes Jen back to her village for a celebration, which is soon interrupted by invading Garthim, implacable as army ants.

Jen and Kira flee deeper into the forest and stumble upon the ruins of a Gelfling town. Gazing in sorrow and wonder upon the remains of their once-noble civilization, they discover an ancient wall carving that reveals the meaning of the shard: it is a fragment of the Crystal that broke off during the long-ago catastrophe when the Skekses took over. If the Crystal is not restored to wholeness before the Great Conjunction of the Three Suns, the Skekses will be invincible, their power eternally replenished by its dark, deformed energy. Finally realizing the urgency of their task, Jen and Kira hop on handy Landstriders and head for the castle of the Skekses at full tilt as the Three Suns move majestically and inexorably closer...

Every great legend has its Flood, and *The Dark Crystal* is no exception. In this case it's a flood of merchandising tie-ins that will soon be inundating U.S. markets. No less than four books will appear in conjunction with the movie: a novelization and a children's picture book, both from Holt, Rinehart & Winston; a book on the making of the *The Dark Crystal* from Muppet Press; and a coffee-table extravaganza from Knopf. You can immerse yourself in any of these or perhaps in Marvel's new line of *Dark Crystal* comic books as you listen to the Warner Brothers soundtrack album. In addition, there will be posters, greeting cards, a calendar and still-unspecified "other products" from "select manufacturers." Finally, for those with the cash and the closet space, there's a line of couture clothing called The Dark Crystal Collection.

Fantasy, it turns out, is much more than the free play of the imagination—it's a springboard to free enterprise in full flower!

—J.J.

Aughra's observatory, with orrery (an astronomical tracking device). Here Jen finds the missing crystal shard.

